Telecom Circle. The bifurcation of Ahmcdabad Telecom District into two administrative units has not been found justified on the basis of existing policy of creating secondary switching Areas.

(c) Question docs not arise.

STD Facilities in Rural Areas of Andhra Pradesh

1018. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that STD calls do not matcrilise easily between Hyderabad and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) whether Government propose to improve STD calling facility to rural areas in Andhra Pradesh in 1995-96?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No. Sir. Quality of STD service in Andhra Pradesh as judged by the STD call completion rate is quite satisfactory.

(b) Yes, Sir. the quality of STD service in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh is planned to be further imporved during 1995-96 by augmenting the number of STD circuits and also by provision of reliable transmission meida such as U.H.F. radio, optical fibre and cable PCM systems.

Funds to Panchayats for Afforestation of Villages

1019. SHRI MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would sanction funds directly to Gram Panchayats for afforestation of villages;

(b) whether any proposal have been received from Andhra Pradesh Government in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI RAJESTH PILOT): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests does not have a scheme for sanctioning funds directly to Gram Panchayats for afforestation of villages. The Ministry has however taken a decision recently to recognise Panchayats at par with Non-Governmental organisations to enable them to avail of financial assistance under various schemes of Ministry to promote afforestation and tree plantation in .villages.

(b) and (c) No. sir.

Awards for Best Envroirmcntal Achievements

1020. SHRI MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to institute district-wise awards all over the country. for best environmental achievements in 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are monitoring the afforestation efforts all over the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has announced an award called "Zile Ki Sabse'Hari Panchayat" to be given to that Panchayat in each district of the country which shows the best afforestation effort. The award is aimed to encourage tree plantation on community or public lands within the jurisdiction of Panchayats and shall carry cash prize of Rs. 1 lac to the best panchayat in each district assessed on the basis of

plantation work done by them in the period 1996-2000. Details of the programme arc given at statcmcnt-1. *(Sec* below)

(c) and (d) Survival rate studies in respect of afforestation and tree planting activities arc undertaken annually on the basis of sample checks conducted in around 50 districts selected at random throughout the country. Sample checks conducted in respect of afforestation and tree planting activities during 1991-92 and 1992-93 have been completed. Sample checks of afforestation and tree planting activities undertake during 1993-94 and 1994-95 are being conducted. Results of the sample checks of 1991-92 and 1992-93 are given in the statements at statement II and III. *(See* below) These sample checks have revealed that while there arc location-wise and species-wise variation, the overall survival rate of plantations generally varies from 55% to 80%.

Statement I

Name of the programme: Zile Ki Sabse Hari Panchayat

Green cover in the country is very crucial for sustainable land use and water recharge. Trees also provide for constructional timber, fuelwood, fodder, medicines and many item of domestic use for the rural population. Indirectly, trees also affect agriculture production, animal husbandry, drinking water and many other aspects.

The following is suggested:—

/. Aim

To encourage Panchayats to take up large scale tree planting on all available non-agricultural lands.

//. Concept

With the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, tree plantation is a major responsibility of panchayats. Funds are made available to the panchayats for such activity, but it is found that in recent years plantation has not been given adequate emphasis by them. In order to encourage more tree plantation it is proposed to institute an award for the Panchayats that make the best afforestation effort in each district of the country. All panchayats of the country arc eligible for this award. Panchayats will submit details of plantation works done by them in the period 1996-2000. These will be got verified appropriately. The Panchayat that has done the best work will be selected for the award as per the procedure established by the state government.

///. Eligibility

All panchayats of the lowest tier (and equivalent bodies where these exist in lieu of panchayats)

IV. Conditions

(a) Trees will be planted on community or public (all lands which arc other than private lands) lands within the jurisdiction of the Panchayat. These may be roadside, canal side, railway embankments, block plantations etc.

(b) Pasture development will not be considered.

(c) 750 Trees planted will be considrcd as equivalent to afforestation of 1 ha. land area. The minimum area to be covered will be 10 ha. (notionaly) in 4 years.

V. Mode of Operation

(a) Scheme announced on 14th November 1995.

(b) Panchayats inform the concerned District level Forest Official of their work with substantiating documents by end of September, 1999.

(c) Scrutiny and selection of the Panchayat with best afforestation effort in each district by end of October, 1999.

(d) State Governments inform Ministry of Environment and Forests of the best Panchayats by end of November, 1999.

(e) Announcement/Presentation of Awards on 4th January, 2000. (The

day is significant as the Ministry of Environment & Forest was established on this day in 1995).

VI. Award/Prize

The best Panchayat in each district will get as cash prize of Rs. 1.00 lakh.

Statement II

Results of survival rate studies conducted through Independent Experts/Agencies in respect of plantation carried out during 1991-92

s. No.	Name of District	Average Survival Percentage*
1.	West Tripura	70.5
2.	West Kameng	80.3
3.	West Khasi Hills	65.8
4.	Mehsana	70.0 above
5.	Koraput	85.0—90.0
6.	Mandi	78.34
7.	Alwar	88.22
8.	Sangrour	86.4
9.	Jalaun	82.85
10.	Bareilly	74.25
11.	Sarguja	75.48
12.	Jorhat	40.0—50.0
13.	Mokkachung	80.0—90.0
14.	Manipur	70.0—80.0
15.	Bahraich	85.2
16.	Chandrapur	64.5
17.	Chindwra	61.3
18.	Kapurthala	91.7
19.	Midnapur	49.2
20.	Nadia	79.6
21.	Sambalpur	81.4
22.	South Sikkim	50.6
23.	Medak	62.8
24.	Goa	68.0
25.	Idduki	71.78
26.	Kasargod	84.83
27.	Jalgaon	77.71
28.	Thanjavur	81.2
29.	East Godwari	68.28
30.	Kathua	62.17
31.	Kola	70—90
32.	Bastar	82.07
33.	Pauri Garhwal	77.72
34.	Jamnagar	70.0 above &
35.	Barmer	72.0
36.	Mandsaur	51.43
37.	Churu	72 to 87
38.	Dungarpur	65 to 85
39.	Bhiwani	60 to 98
40.	Nellore	82.7
41.	Nilgiris	70 to 90
42.	Gulbarga	22
43.	Mangalore (South Kaannara)	87
44.	Dharampuri	69

"Subject to speri»wisdocation wise variations.

Statement III

Results of survival rate studies conducted through Independent experts/agencies in respect of Plantation carried out during 1992-93

S. No.	Name of District	Average survival Percentage*
1	Mahbubnagar	67.17
2	Trissur	44.53
3	Shimoga	67.39
4	Khammam	63.73
5.	Hoshangabad	72.34
6	Quilon	84.78
7	Saran	79.00
8	Bikaner	68.25
9	Udaipur	72.70
10	Singhbhum	84.85
11	Jalpaiguri	55.5
12	Dhule	74.92
13	West Sikkim	51.13
14	Salem	72.5
15	East Khasi Hills	59.5
16	West Manipur	79.7
17	North Tripura	73.3
18	Karbi Anglong	60
19	Aizawal	55 to 65
20	Kohima	70 to 80
21	West Sing	60 to 70
22	Phulbani	85 to 95
23	North Arcot	84
24	Periyar	79
25	Chamba	59.48

s. No.	Name of District	Average survival Percentage*
26	Rohtak	83.6
26	Bhatinda	80
28	Ambala	67 to 78
29	Hoshiarpur	62 to 86
30	Gorakhpur	63.31
31	Pithoragarh	60
32	Mirzapur	65
33	Shivpuri	78.4
34	Cudapah	60
35	Junagarh	70.8
36	Bhandaja	65.93
37	Udhampur	82.1
38	Purulia	0 to 90
39	West Champaran	82
40	Sirmaur	67.17
41	Sundergarh	86.7
42	Dhenkanla	80 to 93
43	Kolhapura	85
44	Bilaspur	75

'Subject to speci-wise/location wise variations.

स्मारक डाक-टिकटें

1021. **श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे :** क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या गुजरात सरकार ने केन्द्रीय सरकार को उर्दु के राष्ट्रीय कवि स्वर्गीय श्री जवाहर चन्द मेधानी की जन्म शताब्दी पर स्मारक टिकट जारी करने के लिए अनुरोध किया है,

(ख) उक्त अनुरोध पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है,

(ग) क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार ने राज्य सरकार के अनुरोध पर स्वीकृति प्रदान कर दी है, और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो उनके क्या कारण है?

संचार मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री सुखराम): (क) राष्ट्रीय उर्दु कवि स्व. श्री जवाहर चंद मेधानी की जन्म शताब्दी पर स्मारक डाक-टिकट जारी करने के लिए गुजरात सरकार से ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त नहीं हुआ है।

(ख) से (घ) उपयुर्क्त (क) को ध्यान में रखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Expenditure incurred on the Union Council of Ministers

1022. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL *alias* MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state the expenditure incurred by Government towards salaries, TA/DA, telephone Bills, and other perks of of the Union Council of Ministers during the period 1993-94 and 1994-95?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (PROF. M. KAMSON): In so far as the Members of the Union Council of Ministers are concerned, information relating to only the expenditure on salaries, allowances and TA/DA is readily avaiable as under:—

	1993-94 (Rs. in	1994-95 thousands)
Salaries	1,902	2,362
Sumptuary & other Allowances	5,750	6,172
Travel Expenditure	3,16,429	3,97,385

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Memorandum of Understanding (1995-96) between the Govt, of india and Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): Madam, I lay on the Table a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of India (Ministry of Runa Communications— Department of Telecommunications) and Vidcsh Sanchar Nigam Limited, for the year 1995-96.(Placed in Library. *See* No. L.T. 8405/95)

Memorandums of Understanding between the Govt, of India and CRL, EIL, BRPL, GAIL, MRL, BPCL, HPCL, IOCL, IBPCL, BLCL, LIL

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): Madam, I lay on the Table a